



The President's Daily Brief

August 15, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

August 15, 1975

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BANGLADESH

Kondakar Mushtaque Ahmed, a pro-Westerner, has been named President of Bangladesh following the ouster early today of the government of President Mujibur Rahman. There have been conflicting reports over the fate of Mujib. Some say he is under house arrest, others assert he has been killed. His two nephews and the Prime Minister have also been reported killed.

Martial law has been declared, a 24-hour curfew has been imposed in Dacca, and the airport has been closed. The name of the country will reportedly now be changed to the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh.

It is not yet clear exactly which elements of the military moved against Mujib or what the nature of the new government will be, but Ahmed, the former commerce minister, was reputedly the most pro-Western member of Mujib's cabinet. He leads a centrist faction within the ruling party.

As Ahmed seeks to consolidate his political power he may seek the support of rightists in the party, who have been in political eclipse recently. The rightists have long been displeased with what they viewed as Bangladesh's leftward drift, Mujib's dependence on India and the Soviet Union, and his increasingly authoritarian rule.

While few Bengalees have dared to speak out against Mujib, discontent has been widespread, especially with his inability to deal effectively with the country's serious economic problems.

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India will be watching developments in Bangladesh closely. New Delhi views the maintenance of a stable and friendly government in Dacca as vital to its interests. The Indians are sensitive to Bengalee charges of interference in the country's internal affairs, however, and are unlikely to intervene directly unless there is a complete breakdown of law and order.

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PORTUGAL-AZORES

The Portuguese government has installed a non-communist junta to administer the Azores and has provided a budget of \$20 million to help solve economic problems there. Lisbon hopes thereby to ease the growing pressure for Azorean independence.

General Magalhaes, the military governor of the Azores, who will head the junta, announced on Wednesday that Lisbon had approved his selection of six technical experts to serve with him. The junta has also been charged, in coordination with the popularly elected constituent assembly in Portugal, with drawing up a statute on autonomy.

The Azoreans had feared that Portugal's military leaders would appoint pro-communists or radical leftists to the junta. General Magalhaes apparently succeeded in convincing the leaders in Lisbon that such a move would trigger a revolt, which Portugal would find difficult to suppress.

Prior to Magalhaes' announcement of the junta, a constituent assembly deputy from the Azores told a US embassy official in Lisbon that Azorean separatists would not be satisfied with increased autonomy for the islands. The deputy, a member of the Popular Democratic Party who is believed to be a leader of the separatist Azorean Liberation Front, claimed that the momentum for independence is now irreversible [REDACTED]

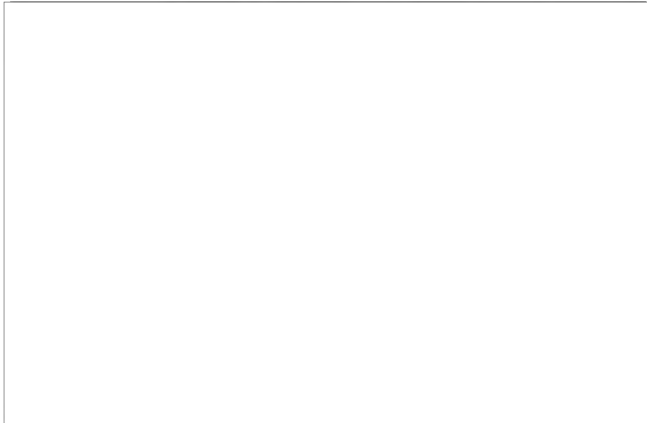
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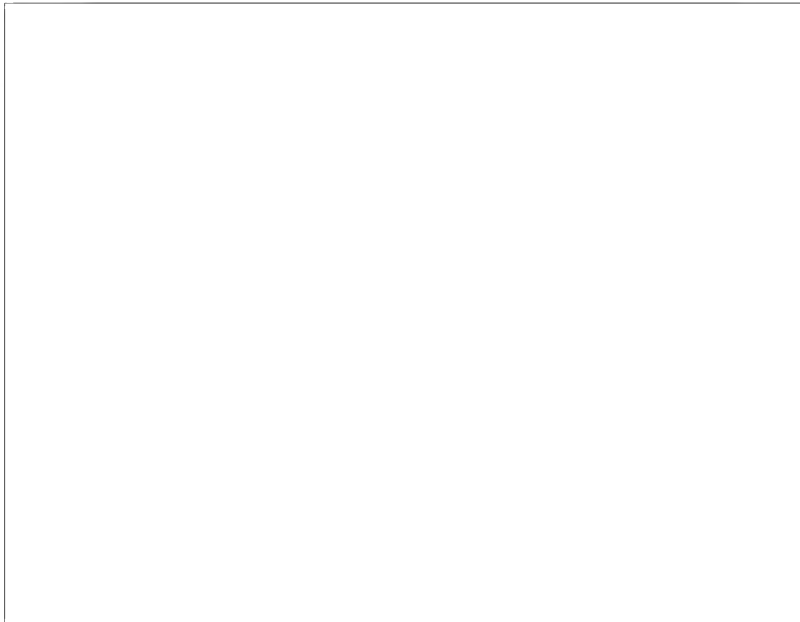
In any event, the Front's ability to stage a successful revolt depends on the support it can win from local military units and their commanders. Magalhaes told newsmen in Ponta Delgada Wednesday that the military in the Azores widely support the document being circulated on the mainland by the non-radical Antunes group. Local military support for a revolt would decrease if the Antunes group should succeed in gaining power in Portugal.

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SAUDI ARABIA - EGYPT



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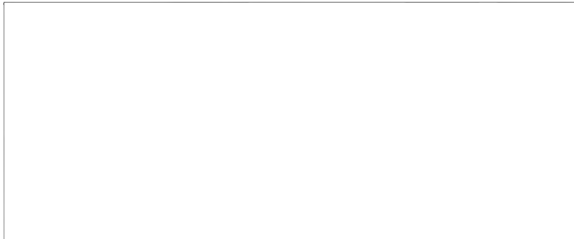


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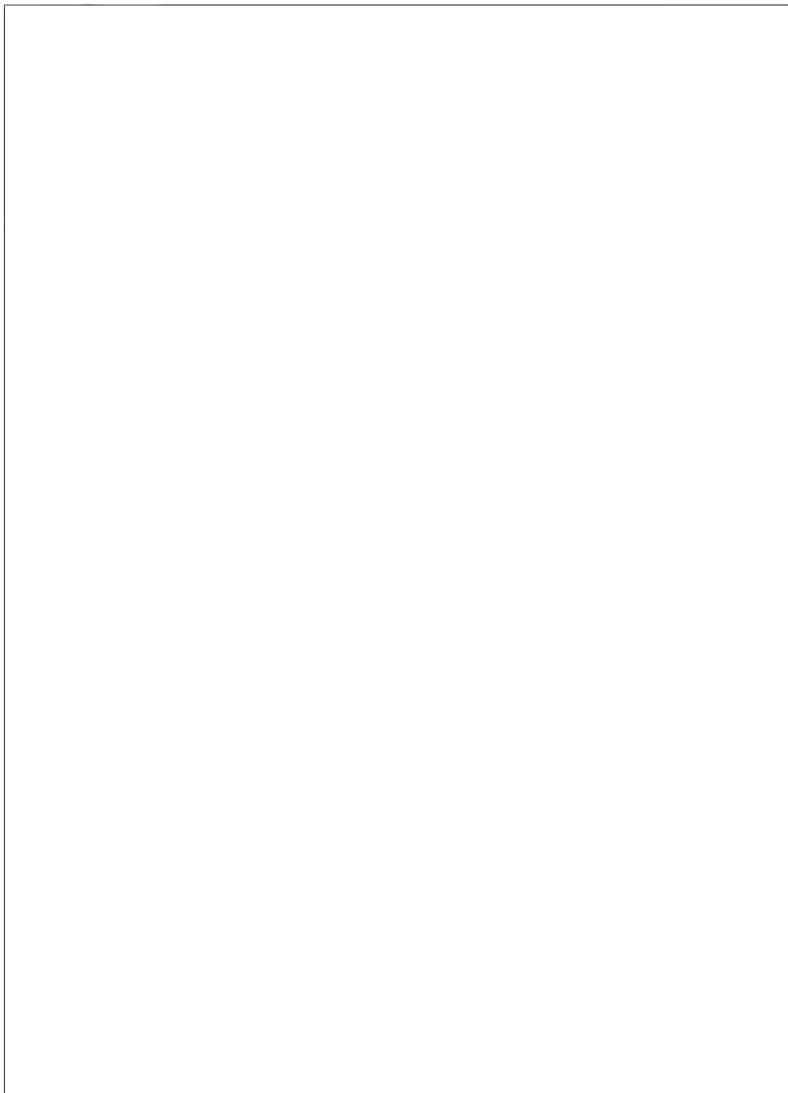
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EGYPT-ISRAEL



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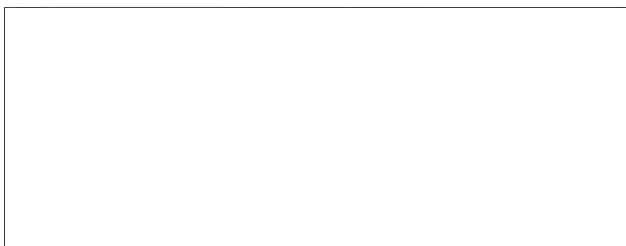


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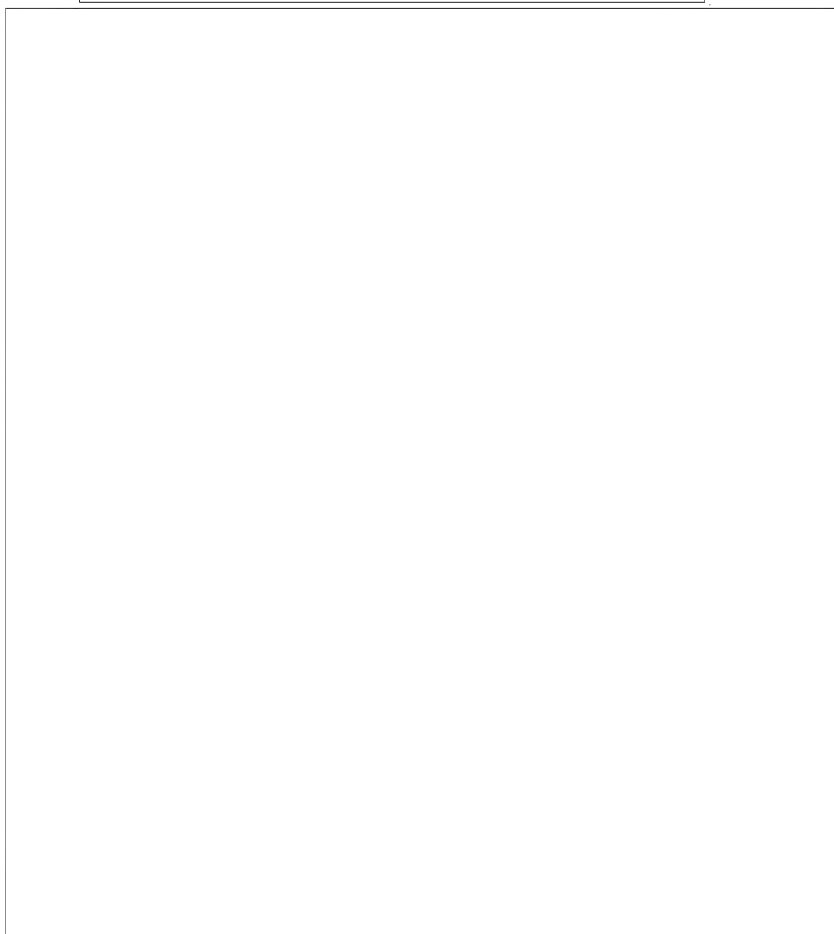
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CHINA



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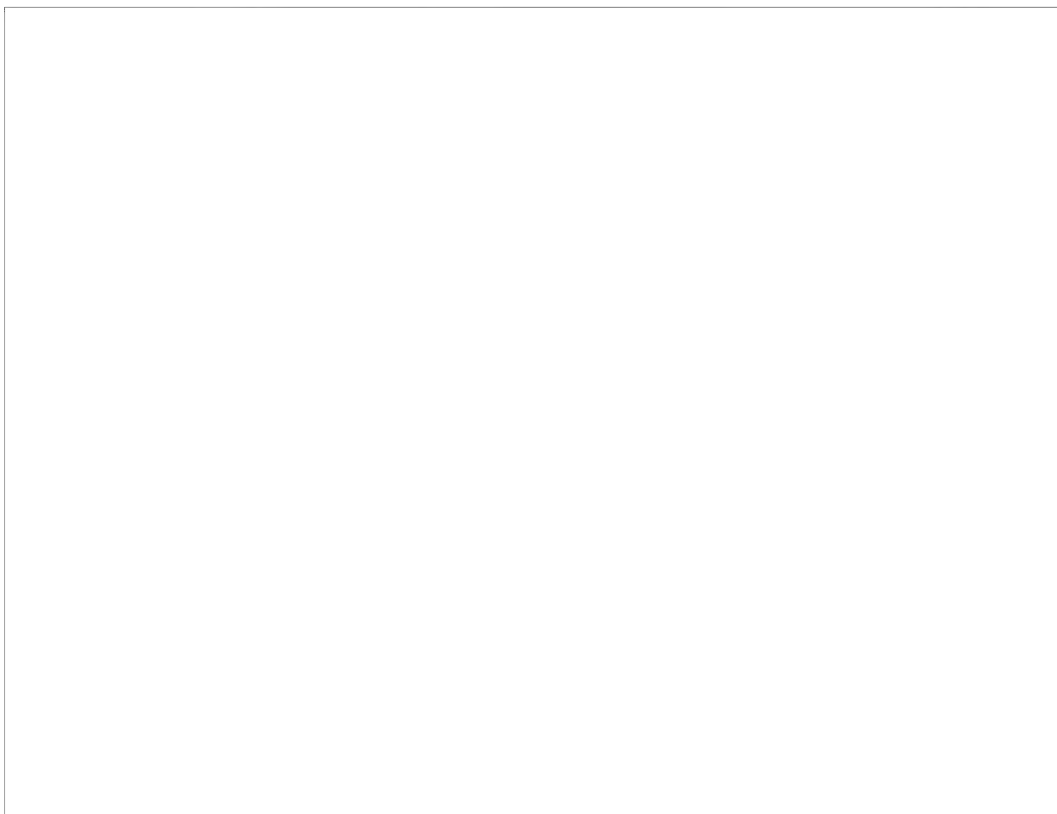
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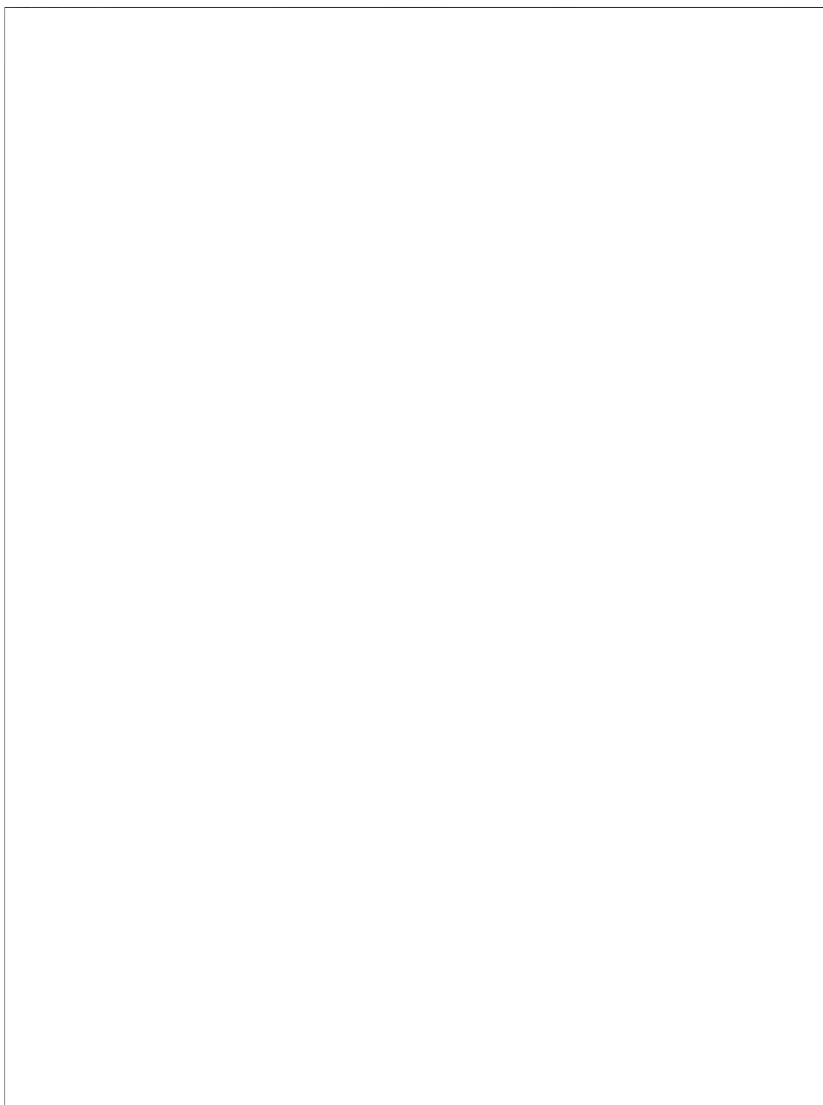
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USSR



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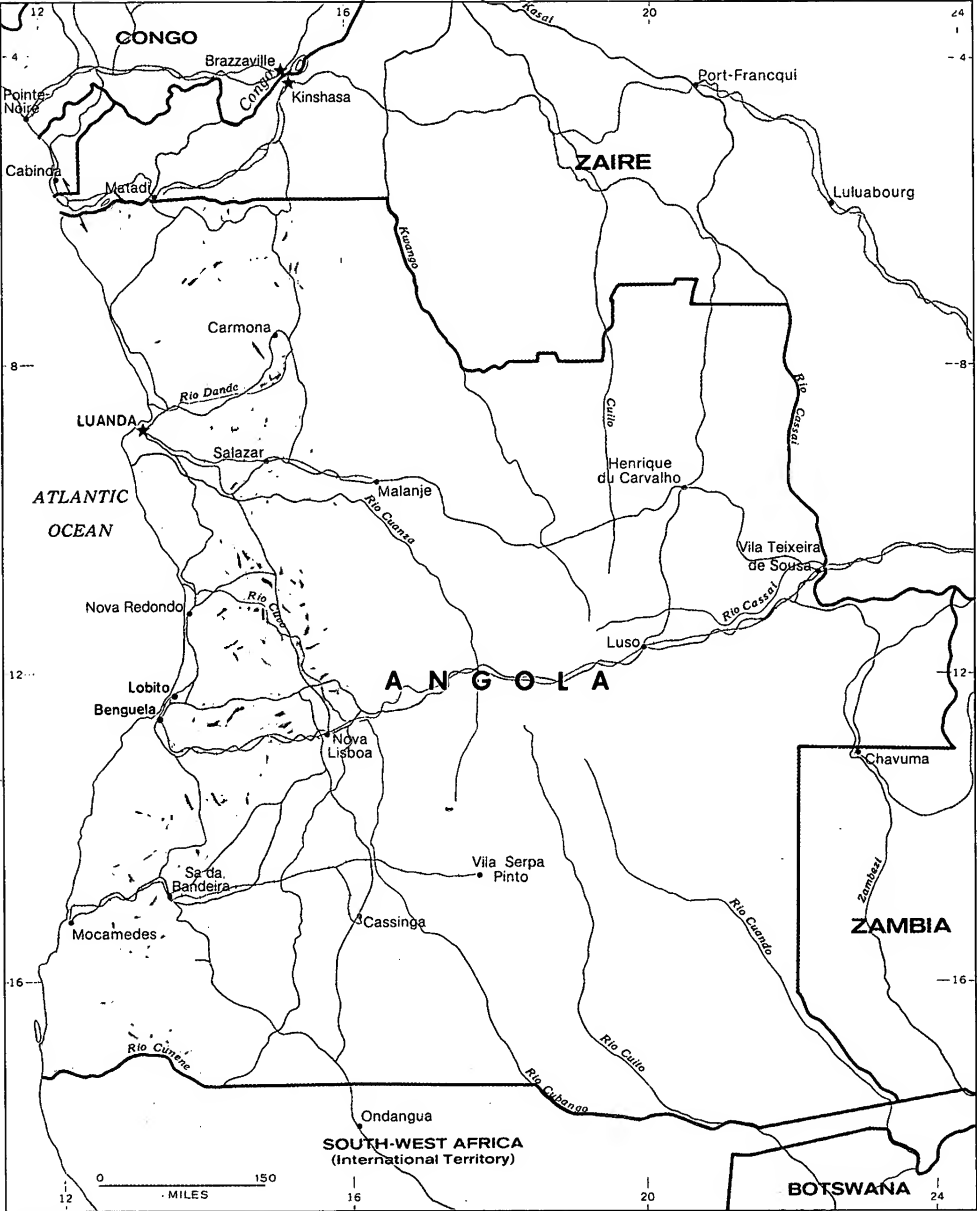
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ANGOLA

Heavy fighting involving all three of Angola's liberation groups broke out early Wednesday morning in the major port city of Lobito. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which controls Luanda, reportedly was pushed out of Lobito and is now holding firm at Benguela, 12 miles south.

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In Luanda, meanwhile, the Popular Movement is attempting to take advantage of its strong position in the city. A spokesman for the group announced on August 11 that it is taking charge of the Ministry of Labor and Social Services, which was run by the National Union until the transitional government collapsed. According to the US consul, the Popular Movement is also quietly taking over a number of other posts vacated by its two rivals. The National Union voluntarily withdrew from the city rather than risk being dragged into a fight for which it was ill-prepared.

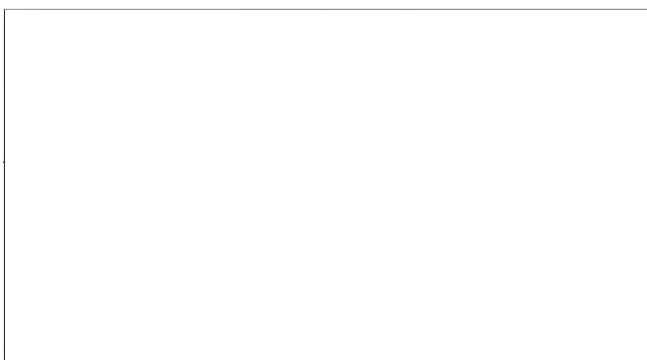
The National Front is attempting to minimize the implications of its defeat in Luanda. The Front's chief representative declared in a press interview in Kinshasa that the transitional government is not defunct and announced that it would soon be convoked "at some secure locality in Angola." The Popular Movement, at least, is likely to ignore any such summons.

The Portuguese military commander announced yesterday, however, that he is assuming administrative responsibility for the territory.

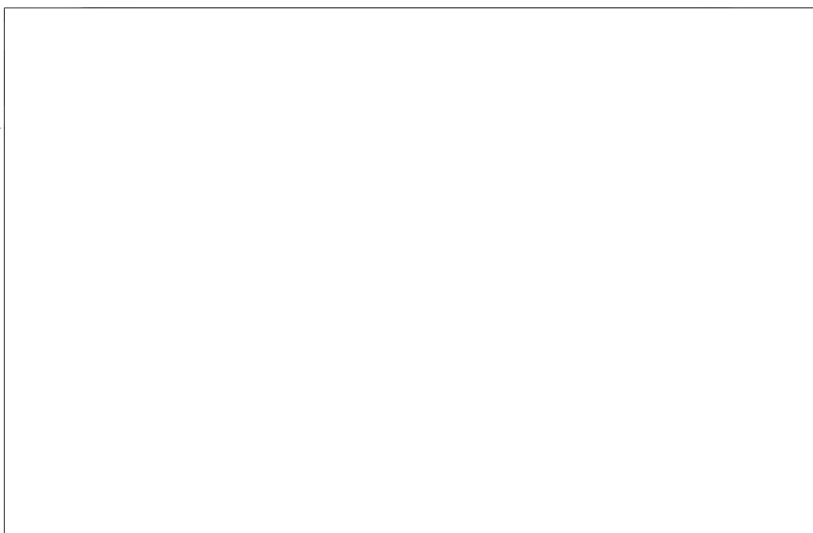
It is evident that no one knows what to do next. Portuguese military officials in Lisbon and Luanda are too distracted by the political struggles in Lisbon to offer any solutions. With the exception of Savimbi, liberation group leaders seem resigned to making the best of whatever military or political situation presents itself.

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LIBYA-TUNISIA



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NOTES

Portuguese Timor

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the situation in Timor is apparently deteriorating. Violent clashes are said to have taken place between rival Timorese political factions both in Dili and in the interior. Some deaths have been reported and the capital is described as tense.

* * *

Pressure continues to grow for the removal of Portuguese Prime Minister Goncalves.

President Costa Gomes is said to have called yet another emergency meeting of the Revolutionary Council. Goncalves' political survival at this point hangs on Costa Gomes' indecision and on disunity among those who want Goncalves out.

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Press reports that France plans to withdraw one third of its troops stationed in West Germany appear to be overdrawn.

The wave of press speculation in France and West Germany was touched off by a report published earlier this week in the French newsmagazine *Le Point* and was quickly picked up by the West German press. The French ministry of defense has issued a formal denial of the report, and a high official of the French foreign ministry told the US embassy that he had no knowledge of such plans.

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